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nótafa and mesefa respectively, are the villagers' and the folklorists' delight.

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Folk drama. Folk drama assumed much greater importance some time back than it does today. It has ramifications in several branches of folk customs, especially in those connected with weddings where the entire ceremony, lasting several days with the active assistance of the village, could be conceived as a play. To a certain extent, the more elaborate ceremonies connected with birth and death contain many dramatic elements, as do certain children's plays.

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Folk drama in the more restricted sense is nowadays performed by children only. Among them, nativity plays (betlehemezés) are the most common, and this custom has spread even into the capital city. Nativity plays have countless variations. As a rule, they are performed by groups of teenage boys who play the following roles: the kengyelfutó 'runner' guides the troop and secures admission into the houses; two "angels" who carry the betlehem, the nativity scene made of painted papier-mâché and clay and lit with candles; there is

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Saint Joseph, Herod, the King who is the leader of the troop, and several shepherds. The carols which are sung and the actual staging of the play differ from region to region but generally follow such a general scheme as, first, an introduction and greeting of the host, the annunciation, Joseph's search for shelter, the adoration (often comical) of the shepherds, and, finally, the leave-taking and the blessing of the house. Often marionettes take part in the play. The medieval sources of the Hungarian nativity plays were the marionette and mystery plays.

On Epiphany, plays similar to the nativity plays, but less common, are performed with the visit of the Magi as their subject. In these, one of the performers operates the ugrós csillag 'the jumping star,' a star made of shiny paper and mounted so that it can be suddenly raised or lowered. The shepherds of these plays wear sheepskin coats with the fur turned outside, possibly reminiscent of the early animal costumes of primitive plays. Others wear white linen costumes similar to ecclesiastical habits and tiara-like paper head gears.

Less common are the Gergelyjárás play, a student

536 Less common are the Gergely járás play, a student
796 recruiting play performed in some places on March 12, Saint
857 Gregory's day, formerly the day on which school began; the Balázsolás, on February 3, the day of Saint Blasius, patron of children; and the PünkösdOlés, a Pentecostal play featuring the election of a queen for the day.

The children performing these plays collect gifts of food from the host at the end of their performance.

535 Folk dancing. Among the group dances of the Hungarian peasants, round dances are performed today only by children and unmarried girls, and are very uncommon among the men. Women never dance the single dances, which are reserved exclusively for men.

The most important types of single men's dances are the dance of the best man (vőfély), rich in improvisations, a few sword or stick dances, and hardsmen's dances. The latter feature crouching dance steps similar to those of the Cossacks. The most famous men's group dance is the verbunkos, or recruiting dance, which is characterized by quiet and graceful movements. The round dance is just one of the many figures in